

4. An introduction to genre analysis

Defining Genre

Discuss with a partner.

- What do we mean by 'genre'?
- How would you define genre?
- What different genres do you teach?
- How do you teach them?

A definition of genre:

According to Swales (1990:58):

“A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the genre and influences and constraints choice of content and style [...] In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience”.

This definition may appear a little confusing at first, so let's break it down.

Discuss with a partner.

1. What is meant by 'communicative purpose'?
2. What does the 'communicative purpose' determine?
3. Do you agree with this definition?
4. Think about a genre that you teach. What knowledge would you need to teach your students in order for them to become 'expert members'?

Exemplar of a genre

1. Cut deep incisions into the chicken flesh with a small, sharp knife. Place the chicken into a bowl and sprinkle over the salt and the juice of two lemons, massaging into the chicken until well coated.
2. Whisk the yoghurt and tandoori spice mix in a bowl until well combined. Pour the marinade onto the chicken and massage into the flesh. Cover with clingfilm and chill in the fridge overnight.
3. Preheat the grill to high.
4. Lift the drumsticks from the tandoori mixture and gently shake off any excess. Place a wire rack over a roasting tin and lay the drumsticks upon it. Grill for 20 minutes, turning regularly, or until richly burnished and the chicken is cooked through. Add more lemon juice to taste.
5. For the dip, place all of the ingredients into a food processor and blend until smooth. Serve alongside the chicken drumsticks.

(BBC Good Food 2013)

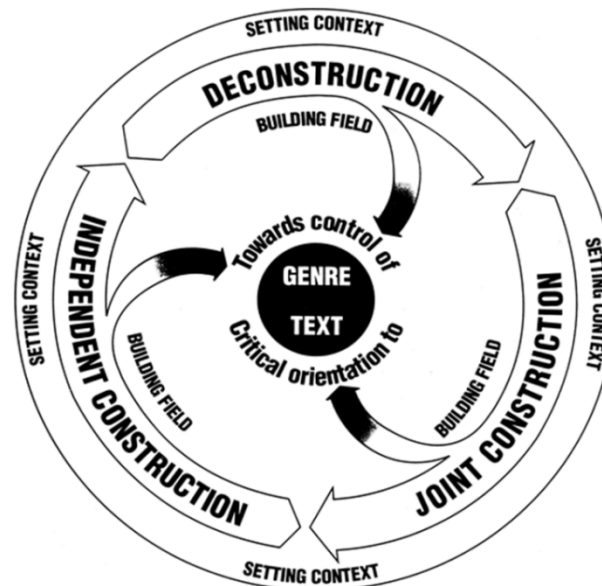
Read the example and answer the questions:

- What is this genre? How did you know?
- **Who** is the intended audience?
- **How** is this genre typically **structured**?
- What **style** is typically used?
- What **language** is typically used?
- **What would your students need to know** in order to become ‘expert members’ of this genre?

Genre-based approaches to teaching Academic Writing

- **Focus:** Explore genres students are required to write. Awareness that variations exist in different contexts of writing.
- **Aim:** to provide a contextual framework.
- **Pedagogic approach:** Genre-informed pedagogic framework (Tribble & Wingate forthcoming).
- **Role of teacher:** guide & support the learners (Vygotskian scaffolding).

The Teaching-Learning Model



(Rothery and Stenglin 1994:8 cited in Martin 2000:19)

Genre-informed approach (Tribble & Wingate forthcoming)

According to Tribble & Wingate, students need the following to be able to deconstruct the genre:

- **Content knowledge**
Knowledge of the concepts involved in the subject area
- **Context knowledge**
Knowledge of the social context in which the text will be read, including the reader's expectations, and knowledge of the co-texts alongside which this new text will be read

- **Language system knowledge**

Knowledge of the aspects of the language system (e.g. lexis, syntax) that are necessary to the completion of the task

- **Writing process knowledge**

Knowledge of the best way of approaching the writing task

Genre-informed approach (in practice)

Having considered the needs of a specific group of academic English students and the different approaches to academic writing, a set of materials were developed which incorporated the genre-informed pedagogic framework (Tribble & Wingate forthcoming). The materials were designed to **deconstruct the genre** and then **reconstruct the genre** of ‘a discursive essay’.

The materials included the following three strategies:

1. Contextual and linguistic analysis (deconstruct)
2. Theme and rheme (reconstruct)
3. Reformulation (reconstruct)

Before we look at each strategy

What do you know about these strategies? With a partner, discuss each one in turn.

You are now going to learn more about each strategy. If the strategy is new to you, make some notes.

Contextual and linguistic analysis

Theme and rheme

Reformulation

Below you can find extracts from the materials.

We are going to work through some of the materials and identify the purpose of each exercise.

Voluntary EAP Session 1 – Analysis of discursive essays

Activity 1: Understanding different types of writing

1. Read texts A, B & C and complete the table.

Text A

Method

1. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 and line a 12-hole muffin tin with cases. In a large mixing bowl beat together the butter, 175g of the sugar and the vanilla extract until light and fluffy. Beat in the whole egg, followed by the 4 yolks, before briefly beating in the flour, baking powder and milk until smooth. Divide two-thirds of the mix evenly between the cases, then top the centre of each with 1 tsp jam. Divide remaining cake mix over the top, using a wet finger to smooth it in place so no jam is visible. Bake for 18-22 mins until a skewer poked into the centre comes out clean. Wait until cool enough to handle, then transfer the cakes to a flat baking sheet.
2. Lower oven to 110C/90C fan/gas ¼. Using a large, clean bowl, beat the 4 egg whites until stiff, then continue whisking while you gradually add the remaining 175g sugar. Beat until thick and shiny, then fold in the coconut and use spoonfuls of the mixture to top each cake. Bake for 30-35 mins until the outside of the meringue is crisp, then cool before serving.

Text B

Bedrooms: 1 Receptions: 1 Bathrooms: 1

A spacious One Bedroom Ground Floor apartment located in a popular Oatlands Development. This property offers a large lounge with doors leading to balcony, kitchen, bathroom and large double bedroom. The property is well located to walk to Walton on Thames mainline station and to either Weybridge or Walton On Thames town centres.

*Entrance Hall * Living Room With Doors Leading To Balcony * Kitchen * Bathroom * Double Bedroom * Communal Gardens *

Unfurnished

Available 1ST December

Text C

It is a subject of considerable debate as to whether women are naturally programmed to be mothers and homemakers while men are natural breadwinners and protectors of the family. Some consider these to be gender stereotypes which are invalid in modern society. For the purpose of this assignment, 'natural' and 'naturally programmed' will be taken to mean biologically or genetically determined. The topic in question has raised considerable amounts of attention, essentially from advocates of women's rights because it implies a sexual segregation in the labour market. To date, in most western societies, the labour market exhibits a greater percentage of high status occupations being held by the male species. The reasons for these differences seem to be biological. That said, several statistics reveal an increase in the frequency of dual income families, which argues against the theory that biological differences lead to fixed gender roles. This essay will discuss if and to what extent differences in male and female behaviour and physical differences of the sexes lead to rigid 'natural' gender roles and whether these are essential for the functioning of families and societies. Firstly, we will examine the behaviour of men and women from a biological and cultural point of view. We will then consider the physical differences between men and women and examine the gender stereotypes that exist in today's society.

	Text A	Text B	Text C
1. What is the type of writing known as? How do you know?			
2. Is there anything typically missing from this type of writing?			
3. What register is used? E.g. letter, report, review, etc.			
4. What type of language is used in the text? E.g. academic, topic specific, etc. Give examples where possible.			

Once you have completed the table, compare your answers with your partner.

Time to reflect

1. What do you think the essay title is for Text C?
2. What are your opinions about the subject?
3. How would you expect the rest of the essay to be structured?

Activity 2: Understanding the context of different types of writing

1. You are now going to contextually analyse either Text A or B. Your teacher will assign you a text.

With a partner, complete the following table.

What is the name of this type of writing of which this text is an example? E.g. article, report, etc.	
In what social setting is this kind of text typically produced? E.g. for the general public, for academics, etc. What constraints (limitations or restrictions) and obligations does this setting impose on writers and readers?	
What is the communicative purpose of this text? E.g. To warn, to inform, etc.	
What is the role of the writer in this type of text? E.g. To inform the audience about....., etc.	
What is the role of the reader in this type of text? E.g. To learn about current issues, etc.	
What shared cultural values might be required of writers and readers in this type of text? E.g. That essays always have an introduction, main body and conclusion, etc.	
What knowledge of other texts may be required of writers and readers of this type of text? E.g. in the case of an essay it may help you to know about report writing.	

Exercise adapted from class material written by Tribble, C (2011) on the MA in ELT and Applied Linguistics at King's College, London.

Activity 3: Understanding the structure and language of a discursive essay

1. We are now going to focus solely on Text C. Read the complete text and answer the following questions on your own. (Please note the complete text has not been included here)

	Text C
How is the overall text organised? E.g. Heading, list of ingredients and method.	
How are the paragraphs in the main body organised? E.g. Topic sentence +...	
What is the purpose of each of the paragraphs in the main body? E.g. To present an argument in favour of the essay title.	
Are there any patterns in the organisation of the main body paragraphs? E.g. Problem, solution, cause, effect, etc.	
Why are the main body paragraphs organised in this way? To..	
Are there any key words or phrases that are used to begin paragraphs/sentences?	
Pick one paragraph in the main body, does it contain more adjectives, verbs, nouns or adverbs? Why do you think this happens?	
What is the typical structure of the sentences in the text?	

Now discuss your answers with your partner.

Time to reflect

1. Have you ever thought before about the structure or language used in a discursive essay?
2. Do you feel this exercise can help you improve your draft essay? If yes, how?
3. Is there anything else regarding the structure or language that you would like to know?

Homework

Think about how what you have discovered in today's lesson can help you with Assessment

1. Make changes to your draft essay accordingly.

List of references

Text A. BBC Good food, 2012 [online] Available at:

<http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/470638/little-louise-cupcakes> [Accessed 13th January 2012].

Text B. Martin Flashman & Company, 2012 [online] Available at:

<http://www.martinflashman.co.uk/property/2370211> [Accessed 13th January 2012].

Text C. Authentic student essay adapted for the purpose of this exercise (permission received from the student to use and adapt her essay).

Voluntary EAP Session 2 – Further analysis of discursive essays

Activity 1: The language used in discursive essays

Using the concordance programme *Antconc*, the most frequent linking words and clusters of words used in a selection of 70 undergraduate discursive essays have been identified. In the first part of the lesson, we are going to examine the findings.

1. From a collection of 70 undergraduate discursive essays, what do you think the 10 most frequent words were? Discuss with your partner and write your answers.

Linking words

2. Here is a list of the 10 most frequent linking words used in the discursive essays in order of frequency.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. However | (frequency 277 - average of 3.9 times per essay) |
| 2. therefore | (frequency 153 – average of 2.2 times per essay) |
| 3. however | (frequency 112 – average of 1.7 times per essay) |
| 4. Although | (frequency 88 – average of 1.2 times per essay) |
| 5. although | (frequency 86 – average of 1.2 times per essay) |
| 6. Therefore | (frequency 67 – average of 0.9 times per essay) |
| 7. Thus | (frequency 63 – average of 0.9 times per essay) |
| 8. Since | (frequency 58 – average of 0.8 times per essay) |
| 9. Whilst | (frequency 49 – average of 0.7 times per essay) |
| 10. Furthermore | (frequency 47 – average of 0.6 times per essay) |

With a partner, discuss the different uses of linking word.

3. Examine the concordance lines given to you by your teacher and answer the following question for each linking word.

Linking Word	What is the linking word typically preceded by?	What is the linking word typically followed by?
However	<i>N/A as linking word starts the sentence</i>	<i>Comma + subject pronoun (I, it, etc)</i>
therefore		
however		
Although		
although		
Therefore		
Thus		

.....

3 word clusters

Here is a list of the 10 most frequent 3 word clusters used in the 70 discursive essays analysed.

5. Look at each cluster and complete the table. If you are unsure of the meaning or use please see the extra h/o with the concordance lines. Only complete the fourth column if you answer 'no' to either column two or three.

3 word cluster	Do you know how to use this cluster in context?	Have you ever used this cluster in your assignments?	Write a sentence using the cluster.
1. as well as			
2. the fact that			
3. in order to			
4. due to the			
5. in terms of			

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Voluntary EAP Session 3 – Working with & writing texts

Activity 2: Theme and Rheme

The terms ‘theme’ and ‘rheme’ refer to how information is distributed in a sentence. If information is carefully distributed, it enhances the cohesion of a text.

Look at the following examples.

Theme	Rheme
1. Nasal surgery	is increasingly popular with women in their 20’s.
2. In the hospital	the patients are looked after by the staff.
3. “Clearly,	there are risks associated with the use of streptomycin in
4. Are	pregnancy”*. you contemplating cosmetic surgery?

*Extract taken from ‘The Science News-Letter’ (1965) Vol. 88. No 7. P98

The four most commonly used themes are:

- Prepositional
- Adverbial
- Verbal
- Nominal (noun)

1. From the examples in the table above, can you identify the types of themes?

2. Underline the ‘themes’ in each sentence and identify the types of themes.

Example: Tattoos can be removed by laser
Tattoos can be removed by laser. = Nominal theme

1. “Cosmetic surgery is a rapidly growing medical speciality.....”
2. “Removing the top layers of the dermis promotes regeneration of collagen, elastine and epidermis”.
3. “Unfortunately, they also remove normal pigment, which may result in bleaching of the skin”.
4. “Resurfacing methods treat superficial wrinkles and repair skin aged by light”.

Extracts taken from Hoeyberghs, J. L. (1999:514-515)

Time to reflect

1. Do you ever think about the positioning of words in a sentence?
2. What type of information do you think is typically placed in the theme and rheme position?

Important information about 'theme' and 'rheme'

- Typically, 'given' information is presented in the theme and 'new information is presented in the rheme.

And often:

- The rheme of one sentence becomes the theme of the next sentence **Or**
- The theme of one sentence is the same as the theme of the next sentence.

3. Look at paragraphs 1 & 2.

(1) underline the theme and rheme in each sentence

(2) try and identify the theme in the second/third sentence e.g. does the rheme of the first sentence become the theme for the next sentence? Or is the same theme used for the first, second and third sentences?

Paragraph 1

Patients requesting cosmetic surgery are usually normal individuals, but with a heightened consciousness about their looks. A proportion of them may seek advice on what, to them, seems an unsatisfactory appearance. They deserve the same professional approach and empathy as patients seeking help for clinical disorders.

Paragraph 2

Sagging eyebrows and forehead creases can be corrected through keyhole incisions in the scalp. This approach has become the standard for many surgeons, and insights into facial movement have enabled more functional surgery to be performed.

Extract taken from Hoeyberghs, J. L. (1999:514-515)

Time to reflect

How can the exercises we have carried out on theme and rheme help you with your own writing?

Activity 3: Re-writing

4. There are numerous problems with the internal cohesion (the themes and/or rhemes) in the following short paragraphs taken from two students' essays. Identify the problems and with a partner re-write the paragraph.

Student visas are needed in the UK by non-European citizens. A specific criteria has to be fulfilled to enter the UK. Increasing numbers of international students from over 180 countries choose to study at a Higher Education establishment in the UK. The UK's higher education system is recognised all over the world by employers, universities and governments.

The government argues that there are many potential benefits. Some state that the use of ID cards will be essential in tackling the increasing problem of immigration and people working illegally in the UK. Those who are looking for work will need to show their cards and if they are illegal they will be reported.

List of references

Anon (1965) 'Nasal Surgery Improved' in *The Science News-Letter*, Vol. 88, No. 7 (Aug. 14, 1965), p. 98.

Hoeyberghs, J, L. (1999) 'Cosmetic Surgery' in *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, Vol. 318, No. 7182 (Feb. 20, 1999), pp. 512-516.

Meyer, E, Jacobson, W, Edgerto, M. & Canter, A. (1960) 'Motivational Patterns in Patients Seeking Elective Plastic Surgery' in *Psychosomatic Medicine*. May 1. 1960. Vol. 22. No 3, pp. 193-201.

Voluntary EAP Session 4 – Noticing differences & rewriting

Activity 2: Reformulated Vs Original version

Before we start this activity it is important you understand what reformulation is.

What is reformulation?

Reformulation is a mistake correction technique used on the output (more typically written) of language learners. The technique requires the students to reflect on their own writing and 'notice the gap' between their current written output and that of a native speaker. This technique aims to help students develop their writing (in this case) or speaking skills.

Read both the original and the reformulated essay and answer the questions.

Version 1

This essay will discuss whether cosmetic surgery is making teenagers obsessed with their appearance. Cosmetic surgery is a “surgery that modifies or improves the appearance of a physical feature, irregularity, or defect.” (The American Heritage® Medical Dictionary, 2007). This essay will show why cosmetic surgery is not making teenager obsessed with their appearance by first explaining that it is not the surgery itself, then by giving the reason why it might still contribute in the obsession and finish with the clarification that it is not teenagers that are obsessed with their appearance due to surgery.

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Version 2

Cosmetic surgery can be defined as a “surgery that modifies or improves the appearance of a physical feature, irregularity, or defect” (The American Heritage Medical Dictionary 2007). This essay aims to discuss whether cosmetic surgery is making teenagers obsess with their appearance. It is evident that this procedure alone is not the only culprit. This essay will start by giving some background information about cosmetic surgery and how it is not the surgery itself that is making teenagers obsess. We will conclude by stating that it is not in fact teenagers that are obsessed with cosmetic surgery but older people between 40-54 years old.

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Reconstruction of the genre (general essay) – Postgraduate level

The following set of materials were developed for a group of postgraduate students who found writing introductions and conclusions difficult. Look at the ways in which the introductions are introduced and then broken down.

Essay Introductions & Conclusions

We are now going to look at how to write a good essay introduction and conclusion.

Before we begin...here are a few questions for you to consider.

Introductions

1. Do you find writing introductions difficult? If yes, why?
2. What is the purpose of an introduction?
3. What do you typically include in an introduction?
4. What percentage of an essay should the introduction be?
5. When do you usually write your introduction?
6. Why is an introduction one of the most important parts of an essay?

We are now going to look at a model introduction, some high-scoring and some high-scoring introductions.

Introductions

Read the following introduction. The key features have been identified.

[1] Immigration is a controversial issue due to its various effects on the UK's society. **[2]** It is constantly on the rise and in recent years has shown no signs of slowing down. A recent study carried out by the Office of National Statistics (2011) has shown an increase to around 36% of the net migration demonstrating the rise in the number of immigrants entering the UK. There has been a long tradition of immigration with the UK receiving "immigrants for centuries" (Segal and Elliott 2010: 124). After the Second World War, "which left over 40 million displaced..." (Castles and Miller 2003: 105), the UK openly searched for labor immigrants to help and rebuild the economy and industries damaged during the war. **[3]** Due to immigration, the UK has experienced a number of damaging effects on its society. **[4]** This essay will examine the problems immigration has such as: the drain on the welfare state, criminal connections, and their neglect to the British way of life. However acknowledgement will also be made, exploring counter arguments that are presented in support of immigration including the economic benefits. **[5]** It will start by looking at the problems that immigration has including the open borders that the UK exercises. Significance will be made of the consequences of the drain on the welfare for example, and later exploring the benefits; notably to the economy, that immigration creates.

- [1]** Introduction to the topic
- [2]** Background information with evidence
- [3]** Thesis statement
- [4]** Purpose of the essay
- [5]** Outline of the structure

High- scoring Introduction 2

Read the introduction and identify the key features.

<p>[1] Migration is defined as “the action of moving to one country, locality [...] to settle in another; also, simply, removal from one place of residence to another” (OED, 2000:1080). [2] After 1945, immigration from Commonwealth countries was actively encouraged. However, immigration has become controversial, especially during recent decades, when recession, unemployment and insecurity have created resentment against immigrants. The issue that currently engages political and social debates is the question of immigration levels, especially in light of Britain’s membership of an ever-expanding European Union. The social, cultural and economic advantages of immigration are often ignored due to mostly unfounded fears that ‘they’ will take ‘our’ jobs. [3] While it has been argued that immigration is an economic benefit both to the immigrant and the host society, an alternative view is that immigration is placing Britain’s already strained infrastructure in danger of collapse. [4] This essay examines the arguments for the theory that immigration benefits the British society and economy. [5] These arguments will be evaluated and compared to opposing claims that immigration is damaging, economically and socially. The essay will conclude that the net benefits of immigration in the UK outweigh the disadvantages.</p>	<p>[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]</p>
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Time to reflect...

- What do you notice about the high-scoring introductions?
- Are there any key features that you have not used before?
- Underline any phrases that you could use in your essays in the future?

Low-scoring Introductions

We are now going to look at some low-scoring introductions. Identify the key features.

Introduction 1

<p>[1] Through the English language, we are able to communicate with people across the world. Even if everybody does not speak English, it is the most spoken language in our world. Researches has shown that one third of our world human population speaks English as their native language, and one out of four of the world’s populations speak English to some level of competence. What made English to our worlds dominant language? Is it because of the economic power of the USA, or are their other reasons? [2] In this essay I will answer these questions.</p>	<p>[1] [2] How could the introduction be improved?</p>
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